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## MARY: TYPE OF THE CHURCH

PETER HEBBLETHWAITE, S.J.

THE topic is not a novel one; but it is none the less vital. Priests who instruct converts may find inherited anti-Marian prejudice obstructing the understanding of the Church, and what is found on the pastoral level is true also in the higher reaches of ecumenical discussion. Karl Barth once remarked to Père Congar: 'Christ unites us, whereas Ecclesiology and Mariology separate us.' This linking of the two stumbling-blocks is an important pointer. Barth is more explicit in his *Kirchliche Dogmatik* where he explains the Catholic position thus: Mary expresses the idea that 'the human creature collaborates (ministerialiter) in its salvation, under the impulse of a prevenient grace; she therefore constitutes in a precise sense the principle, the prototype, the summary of the Church' (1). Now for Barth this position is incompatible with the sovereignty of God as he conceives it. He quotes Ecclesiasticus, 'God is in heaven above, and thou upon the earth (5.1),' which one might counter by evoking Jacob's ladder (Gen 28.12). But at this theological watershed, bandying texts will not help. I will confine myself to unfolding briefly the relations between Mary and the Church.

'Mary is the type of the Church.' The phrase comes from Saint Ambrose (in Luc.CSEL 32/4.45). A 'type' is the foreshadowing of a reality yet to come. It does not simply provide a chance analogy, but a tangible, visible representation of that reality. Manna is a type of the Eucharist, because in so far as it was 'bread descended from heaven' (cf. Jn 6.31-33, 41-50), it hints at the reality of the bread of heaven which is the Eucharist.

It is in this sense that the Fathers speak of Mary as the type of the Church. Her physical maternity — the child within her womb conceived by the Holy Spirit — enables us to grasp what otherwise would be puzzling: the virginal maternity of the Church whose children are born in baptism. The type, in this instance, was probably needed. The Church is a moral person and it would have been difficult perhaps to arrive at the notion of the maternity of a community, unless it had first been concretised in a visible type. By 'bringing forth her first-born at Bethlehem', Mary not only gives us the Son of God, she gives also the key to the understanding of the rebirth of Christians in the Church. 'The Church of Christ rejoices,' says Cesarius of Arles, 'because, just like our Blessed Mother, she is enriched by the action of the Holy Spirit and becomes the mother of divine children' (P.L.1048 B). Psychologically the mediation of Mary's motherhood helps us to understand the maternity of the Church; and historically the understanding of both maternities has been interwoven.

But there is one important qualification to be made from the outset. Our Lady is not wholly like the types of the Old Testament. For they are shadows reflecting a future reality, destined to disappear in the full light of their realisation. *Umbram fugat Veritas*. Their value is as *signs*, and provisional signs. This is not true of Mary. She not only represents



the way the Holy Spirit will bring forth children in the Church, but she is already an outstanding example of the mystery of divine generation. In other words she is both sign and fulfilment. Her role is far from finished when she has pointed a way; she remains the most perfect example of the action of grace, superior in some respects to the Church.

This last phrase calls for some explanation. Of course, Mary's maternity and that of the Church are not simply identical. 'Christ is born of a Virgin Mother according to the flesh and he becomes our Head,' says Saint Augustine; he goes on, 'we are born of a Virgin Mother according to the spirit and become his members' (P.L.40.399). The privilege of divine maternity is not conferred on the Church; it is peculiar to Mary. Vis-à-vis Christ the distinction must be preserved.

It is vis-à-vis Christians that a parallel can be found. Here the motherhood of Mary, the *Mater Christianorum*, has the great advantage that with an individual personal relations can be established more naturally than with a community. On the other hand the motherhood of the Church is wider in scope than that of Mary, for to the Church is entrusted the power of conferring grace through the sacramental order and of ruling through the hierarchy. Thus the motherhood of Mary and that of the Church reveal important differences.

The same is true of the second element in the comparison: the virginity of Mary and of the Church. Virginity, in this context, implies espousals with God. In the Old Testament the union of the people of Israel with Yahweh is envisaged in the form of a marriage. 'I will espouse thee to me for ever' (Os 2.19-20). Now this marriage is fulfilled most perfectly in Mary and in an exceptional way; and through her close union with God we can the better understand the union of the Church with Christ. Once again the mediation of an individual who lives out in the concrete the fulfilment of the promise, familiarises us with an idea which will then apply to the collectivity.

A stray hint in St. Thomas brings together the two notions of maternity and virginity (in IV Sent, dist.38, q.1, a.5). He is explaining that 'ea quae corporaliter in Ecclesia aguntur, signa sunt spiritualium'; but the signs are always inadequate to express exhaustively the spiritual realities they evoke and therefore more than one sign is needed. The example proposed by St Thomas is the part played by virginity and marriage in the Church: considered as vocations, virginity and marriage complement each other; but, and this is St Thomas' point, considered as images (signa), they complement each other once again, since they both express a different facet of the mystery of Christ's effective union with the Church. Virginity stresses the total consecration to God; and marriage the fruitfulness of the Church, constantly bringing forth new sons, and living out in its day to day life that union with Christ which St Paul compared to a marriage (Eph 5.22-23). What St Thomas does not say, but what we can legitimately infer, is that this view defines exactly the role of Our Lady. It is only by 'specialisation' that we can mirror, from afar, the divine realities. But in Our Lady, once and once

only, the double sign is found: she is both virgin and mother, and this work of grace need not appear simply as a stunning paradox which we must uncomprehendingly accept, but as a mystery which throws light on our own situation in the Church whichever it is.

Mary is the type of the Church in her holiness. Saint Paul sees the Church 'in all its beauty, no stain, no wrinkle, no such disfigurement; it was to be holy, it was to be spotless' (Eph 5.27), and as such it echoes the holiness of Mary. Nevertheless she remains, in this respect, superior to the Church. Saint Paul was speaking of the regenerative effects of baptism, but Mary is kept from sin by the privileged grace of the Immaculate Conception. Père Galot concludes (2): 'If the holiness of Mary is the type of the Church's holiness, it is as an inaccessible ideal, although it too is the sanctity of a soul redeemed.' It might be objected that an 'inaccessible ideal' does not help us very much. The objection has weight so long as we stress the sanctity in itself, but if we shift the emphasis to the sanctity of Mary *as a fruit of Redemption*, then it can become meaningful and inspiring for us. Mary is an example of what God can do; she is, in Père Bouyer's phrase, 'l'icône eschatologique de l'Eglise' (3).

But in the interim stage which precedes the eschatological purification of the Church, the Church is a community of sinners. The Church is inferior to Mary not only by the manner of her holiness but also by the degree; no stain of sin has darkened Mary's soul. Just how far sin enters into the essence of the Church is a matter for debate. To say that the Church's holiness means exemption from sin would be to speak of an abstraction: the Church does not exclude sinners from her midst. Père Congar has stated the position with the necessary nuances: 'The Church in the concrete is simultaneously holy and sinful, indefectible and fallible, perfect and yet subject to many imperfections in the course of her history. That in her which is of Christ is holy and spotless; that which depends on human liberty is fallible' (4). If Mary in her sinlessness is the type of the Church, she is type of the Church Triumphant.

Holiness, of course, should not be viewed merely in this negative way. It consists more fundamentally in the sharing in the divine life. Here again Mary, in so far as she is full of grace, transcends the Church's sanctity. In her, sanctity attains its highest degree of fulfilment: God offered to her the greatest grace which has been offered to a human creature, and she humbly welcomed in herself the fullness of God's gift. In the Church too grace abounds, but our lack of receptivity sets limits to God's generosity. None the less Mary remains the type of holiness in the Church because her receptivity will always be exemplary, even though, in its fullness, inimitable.

The superiority of Mary in this respect should not lead us to isolate her on some remote pedestal. We share with her a common destiny. Mary is exempt from sin, but she is not exempt from the effects of Redemption. She and the Church both receive their holiness from Christ, gratuitously; and Mary can say of herself what ordinary Christians



tians must say: but for the grace of Christ we do not know what sins we would be capable of.

In her motherhood, virginity and holiness, Our Lady is the image of the Church, and though multiple distinctions must be introduced, we understand better both sign and signified by relating the two. But we cannot simply conclude with the assertion of a parallelism, however interesting and possibly illuminating it might be. Mary and the Church are bound together not only in the notional realm but also in the actual economy of salvation. Mary typifies the Church, but she also, in a sense, inaugurates it.

Hence if the Fathers frequently applied the same titles to Mary and to the Church, the fundamental reason why this is possible is that the Church is begun in Mary. One of their key notions is that of *restoration* (not that this exhausts their view of Redemption). Zeno of Verona writes: '... From the side of Christ pierced by the lance comes the spiritual body of the spiritual woman, so that Adam is rightly restored through Christ, *Eve through the Church*' (P.L. 11.352). There is no need to insist on the role of Our Lady as Second Eve; *mutans Evae nomen*. The same Zeno could also write: 'O love, you have restored Eve in Mary, you have renewed Adam in Christ' (P.L. 11.278). Zeno does not confuse Mary with the Church; nor does he think they are identical; but he sees in Mary the beginning of the Church. The reality of the Church is perceived in and through Mary. By her divine maternity she is at the source of the whole work of salvation, and thus is an embodiment of the Church which mediates to us the fruits of Redemption. At two essential moments in her life her role is clearly seen: at the Annunciation and at Calvary.

At the Annunciation Mary spoke her *fiat* on behalf of all humanity. Saint Thomas's affirmation of this doctrine (S. Th. III q.30. a.1 ad 1) has been taken up in the conclusion of *Mystici Corporis*. Mary commits by her consent the whole of humanity to the Incarnation; she co-operates in the work of the Incarnation, and such co-operation is the unending task of the Church. This is the point at which Karl Barth diverges.

Along with consent, Mary reveals an attitude of deep faith at the moment of the Annunciation. This aspect of the event is stressed by Saint Elizabeth in her canticle: 'Blessed art thou for thy believing; the message that was brought to thee from the Lord shall have fulfilment' (Lk 1.45). Her act of faith is performed in the name of all men. It contains embryonically the future developments of the faith of the Church. An antiphon from the Common of Our Lady conveys the witness of tradition to the universal bearing of Mary's faith: 'Rejoice, Virgin Mary, because you alone have crushed all the heresies of the whole world.' The antiphon might sound like hyperbole if we lost sight of its firm grounding in the Annunciation: in believing the words of the angel, Mary forestalls and rejects all heresy, because in her act of faith is contained in seminal form that of the Church.

Mary's consent to the Incarnation is completed by her unrecorded

*fiat* on Calvary. Standing by the cross, she shares in the sacrifice of her Son and again represents the Church, is the Church. The idea is sufficiently familiar to need no expansion here. The interchangeability of attributes is explained by the fact that the Church is begun in Mary.

Those who suspect the Church are suspicious of Mary too; but the converse is also true, and to grasp the part of Mary in the economy of salvation helps to explain the Church's role as the dispensing instrument of salvation. God's sovereignty is in no way impaired, nor is the mediation of the one Saviour, Christ. God is not made smaller by his gifts. 'Christianity,' as Karl Rahner reminds us (5) 'is not the religion of which the basic attitude is *Angst*, but rather thanksgiving (*Eucharistia*); and when we praise the great heights to which man has been raised, we praise by that very act God Himself. That is also true of Mariology, which is really only the finest part of the teaching on grace.' *Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est* is more than a fervent outpouring of prayer at a privileged moment; it is the dominant note of Our Lady's life, and of the life of the Church.

#### References :

- (1) French Translation, Geneva, 1954, p. 133.
- (2) 'Marie et L'Eglise', in N. R. T., 1959, p. 121.
- (3) *Le Culte de la Mère de Dieu*, Chevetogne, 1950, p. 33.
- (4) *Vraie et Fausse Réforme dans l'Eglise*, Paris, 1950, p. 128.
- (5) 'Natur und Gnade' in *Fragen der Theologie Heute*, Einsiedeln, 1957, p. 220.

## THE WOMAN OF THE APOCALYPSE

MICHAEL BOSSY, S.J.

**A**ND a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun'.

Does the woman of the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse, crowned with the sun but in anguish of childbirth, refer to the Church or to Our Lady? This simple enunciation has now been by-passed by scholars. In some way she refers to both. But problems remain, and the object of this article is to describe the attempts of some Catholic exegetes to grapple with them (1).

'She was with child, and she cried out in her pangs of birth in anguish of delivery. And another portent appeared in heaven; behold a great red dragon . . . And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear the child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth; she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron . . . and the woman fled (*ephugen*) into the desert' (Apoc 12.2-5).

### *Sion and the Woman*

Père Feuillet describes the Apocalypse as a re-reading of parts of the Old Testament in the light of St John's Christian vision. As the Old Testament context into which St John places the woman of chapter



welve, he claims Isaias' prophecy of the ideal Sion, spouse and city of God and mother of the redeemed Jewish race.

The first passage to which he draws attention is Isaias 66.7, 8: Before she was in labour she gave birth, before her pain came upon her she was delivered of a son (A literal rendering of the Septuagint would run: 'Before she that travailed brought forth, before the travail-pain came upon her, she escaped it, *ephugen*, and brought forth a male child) . . . As soon as Sion was in labour she brought forth her sons'. The similarity of the thought of this passage and of the Apocalypse, the woman in labour bringing forth a male child, is underlined by the repetition of *ephugen*, *exephugen*, though in each case in a different sense.

The woman in the passage of Isaias is Sion. Earlier texts of the same prophet describe Sion as mother: 'Sing, O barren, who did not bear, break forth into singing, you who have not been in travail! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her that is married . . . For the Lord has called you like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God' (Is 54.1,6).

Sion shall be the Lord's fruitful spouse. She is also the city upon whom the glory of the Lord has arisen, to whose light the nations shall come, whose sons shall come from afar, whose daughters shall be carried in the arms. 'The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night, but the Lord will be your everlasting light and your God will be your glory' (Is 60.19,20).

Sion is the city of the Lord's glory; she is the mother bearing sons and daughters who are the Lord's. The situation is paralleled in the Apocalypse by the woman crowned with the sun who yet bears in anguish the male child. The parallel is emphasised by the constant use made of these chapters of Isaias in the final vision of the Apocalypse when God makes all things new. 'And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband' (Apoc 21.2).

One further text of Isaias may be considered. 'As a woman in travail draws nigh to be delivered, and cries out in her pain, so have we been to thy beloved. We have conceived, O Lord, because of thy fear, and have been in pain, and have brought forth the breath of thy salvation' (Is 26.17,18). The birth cries of the woman in the Apocalypse seem to be a reminiscence of this passage in which the faithful Jews are described as bringing forth the Messiah. And the passage continues: 'In that day God shall bring his holy and great and strong sword upon the dragon, even the serpent that flees . . . He shall destroy the dragon' (Is 27.1).

Père Feuillet appears to conclude justly that the background to St John's vision and its primary explanation lie in Isaias' prophecy of Sion, the glorious city whose sons are the redeemed Israel, through whom the dragon, the old serpent of Genesis, will be destroyed. The

Apocalypse sets these ideas into a Christian context, as does St Paul writing to the Galatians: 'But the Jerusalem above is free and she is our mother' (Gal 4. 26). And the Christian context is the Church, God's spouse and holy city, mother of all the faithful. The woman, after the birth of her child, flees before the dragon to the desert to be nourished there by God for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. In biblical imagery the desert is the place where God's people wander in the period before they enter the promised land of heaven; there they are nourished by the manna of the Eucharist; there they remain for the one thousand two hundred and sixty days, the times of the persecution in Danial 7.25 and 12.7. The woman is described in language suited to God's people in the period between the two comings of Our Lord.

### *The birth of the male child*

Does this explanation exclude a reference to Our Lady in the Apocalypse? It is difficult to imagine that St John failed to think of Our Lady in the woman who brought forth the Messiah, the child who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron. But the account of the anguished birth of the child caught up at once to the throne of God does not sound like a description of the birth at Bethlehem. And it is to the nature of the birth of the child of the Apocalypse that we must turn before we can adequately discuss the question of a reference to Our Lady in the chapter.

Père Feullet again directs us to a text that may clarify the passage, the parable of the joy of a woman bearing a child that our Lord spoke to the Apostles at the last supper. 'A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me (*mikron . . kai palin mikron*). Truly, truly I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice' (Jn 16.19-22).

Our Lord is comparing the hour of a woman in childbirth with the hour of his passion. But it seems most unconvincing to link this parable with the childbearing of the Apocalypse until it is realised that in the parable St John is working over exactly the same passages of Isaiah as formed the background for the woman with child of the Apocalypse. 'You shall see and your heart shall rejoice', when Sion brings forth her children (Is 66.14). The 'little while' recalls the little time (*mikron hoson*) that must elapse until God's anger passes and Sion can bring forth 'the breath of thy salvation' (Is 26.20). And in Isaiah 54: 'For a brief moment (*chronon mikron*) I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you.'

This series of texts seems to establish a connection between the



passion and both Our Lord's parable in St John and the woman bearing the child in the Apocalypse. Père Feuillet's conclusion is that the birth in Apoc 12 is the allegorical birth of the new creation at Calvary. If this is so, then the difficulties of a Mariological interpretation of the passage in the Apocalypse derived from the Virgin birth would disappear, and the immediate taking up of the child to God's throne would be a perfectly intelligible description of the Ascension that followed the birth pangs of the new world.

Other New Testament writings describe the inauguration of the eschatological times as birth, (Mk 13.8 and parallels; I Thess 5.3; Rom 8.22). The Resurrection is described in the same way. 'Thou art my son, this day I have begotten thee' (Psalm 2.7) is applied to the Resurrection (Acts 13.33); St Peter describes God's action in raising Christ from the dead as 'loosing the birthpangs of death' (Acts 2.24). It is not, then, in any way implausible that St John both in the Gospel and in the Apocalypse should attach the notion of birth and its pangs to the Passion.

*Woman of the Apocalypse and Mary the mother  
of the beloved disciple*

But if the birth in Apocalypse 12 refers to Calvary and is in no way connected with the joyous virginal birth at Bethlehem, how can one see Our Lady in the travailing woman? One thinks naturally of the spiritual maternity of Our Lady consummated at the foot of the cross, *compassione maternali*, and of the words of Our Lord to her and to St John. And many Catholic exegetes see a connection between the two texts. Père Braun maintains it strongly: 'le parallèle ne laisse rien donc à désirer.'

One is prepared for a specifically Johannine treatment of the Passion to be found in both the gospel and the Apocalypse. In the war in heaven (Apoc 12.7-12) the devil is cast down (*ēblēthē*) from heaven by Michael and the angels, and a voice is heard praising the power of the victorious and glorified Christ: in the gospel (Jn 12.28-32) Our Lord's affirmation that the devil will be cast out (*ekblēthēsetai*) and that he himself will be exalted, is accompanied by a voice from heaven. The passion theme of the gospel, the struggle between Christ and the devil is transferred to the heavenly sphere in the Apocalypse in the war between Michael and the dragon.

It is tentatively suggested that this Johannine tradition can be extended to include a connection between the mother of Jesus on Calvary and the woman bearing the male child. Two preliminary points of contact appear certain. There is, first, the association of motherhood with the passion. It has been shown that the 'birth' in the Apocalypse is best understood as an allegorical description of the passion: in the gospel Mary's motherhood is linked by St John to the Cross. (Is this the reason why St John makes no use of the infancy narratives?) Secondly, Our Lady receives the beloved disciple, and in him all mankind, as her sons: in the Apocalypse the dragon makes war on the rest

of the offspring of the woman, 'upon those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus' (Apoc 12.17). In both cases the disciples are Mary's children along with the Messiah.

Père Feuillet argues that there is a third link, St John's idiosyncratic use of the word 'woman' (*gunē*) to describe Our Lady in the gospel and its counterpart the woman of the Apocalypse. He quotes with approval Lightfoot's argument which connects Our Lady, the woman of John 19.26,27, with the woman of Our Lord's childbearing parable in John 16.20-22. In each case there is a question of the woman, of maternity, of the hour. But as we have attempted to argue above, both the woman of the parable and the woman of the Apocalypse are linked with Isaias' prophecies of Sion's childbearing. It is, therefore, tempting to add the relation of Sion to Our Lady to the points of contact between the gospel of St John and the Apocalypse in their treatment of the passion.

If the parallel between Apocalypse 12 and the maternity of Our Lady on Calvary is a true one, we are in a position to return to the question from which we took our starting point: the relation between Our Lady and the Church and the woman of the Apocalypse. The description of the woman in pangs of childbirth is based upon the prophecies of Isaias about Sion, spouse of God, mother of the Messiah and men; the childbearing refers to Calvary and to Christ's gift to the woman, his mother, of all his disciples; the same passages of Isaias, used to refer to Our Lady, have suggested that we should see Sion in her. The New Testament writers move freely from Sion to Our Lady to the Church. Mary incarnates Israel: the Church is embodied in Mary. St Luke centres these concepts round the incarnation, St John round the passion.

**Note:**

- (1) It would be an impertinence for the untrained scripture student to embark upon an exegesis of the Apocalypse without reliable guides. The argumentation of this article is derived from a striking article of Père Feuillet (*Revue Biblique* 1959) and a lengthy article of Père Braun (*Revue Thomiste* 1955).

## OUR LADY AND CONSECRATION

MICHAEL O'HALLORAN, S.J.

ON September 27th, 1948, Pope Pius XII issued the Apostolic Constitution 'Bis Saeculari', concerning the Sodalities of Our Lady. The occasion of this was the second centenary of the Bull 'Gloriosae Dominae', by which Pope Benedict XIV had granted the Sodalities of Our Lady many privileges and indulgences. Yet 'Bis Saeculari' was not just an echo of the past; it called for present action, and it assured the Sodalities of a useful future in the life of the Church.

Since 1948 it has been clear that devotion can no longer be considered enough to make a Sodalist. 'Bis Saeculari' reminds the Sodalist that he is a lay apostle, working for the cause of Our Lord and in the service of his Church. The Sodalities are distinctively Marian in charac-



ter, and it is by an act of consecration to Our Lady that a Sodalist formally enters upon his obligations. What then, is the nature of this act, and what does it involve?

First, we must examine the idea of consecration in general; then we will consider consecration to Our Lady in particular.

***Consecration in general.***

To consecrate is to set apart as sacred, to hand over to a holy purpose, to sanctify, whether what is consecrated is a person or a thing. The idea is straightforward, but it can be expressed in many different ways and with a great variety of emphasis.

Consecration is always a direct expression of our worship of God, having in view a yet more perfect serving of him. There are three Sacraments which specially consecrate those who receive them: the baptised as children of God, the confirmed as Christians come of age, and the ordained as new apostles of Christ. On a lesser plane, a building may be set apart and consecrated as a place for the celebration of the liturgy; a chalice is consecrated to hold the Precious Blood of Christ; and oils are consecrated for the right administration of certain sacraments. There is a great round of consecrations in the life of the Church, a halo over all creation.

Yet creation is already holy, for it cannot be otherwise with anything that has come from the hand of God. An act of consecration does not deny this holiness; it emphasises it. God made all things good, and it is for him to choose out of creation whatever is to be dedicated to an immediate or special service of him. Normally then, a consecration can be performed only by one who is duly established to act in the name of God, using a form of words accepted and approved by the Church. This is a ceremonial action, requiring a fit minister and a worthy subject, and so its details are subject to the regulations of Canon Law (C.J.C.1147,1148.2).

Consecrations differ in their effects. The greatest effect a consecration can have is to set up a new relationship between God and the subject of it. The baptised, the confirmed and the ordained are given the intimacy in Gods' service proper to the state of life which they are entering; they are that much holier, that much nearer to God. This does not mean that their consecration will necessarily make them behave in a holier way, bringing them an increase in ethical holiness. What it means is that because of their consecration, these people now have a new and a higher place in the scale of relationships which link men to God. As for material objects, we have no difficulty in recognising that a chalice, for example, once it is consecrated, becomes a sacred vessel. Its precious metal and its gems had some value before; they retain that value still, but it is now something secondary. These are clear-cut cases in which consecration sets apart as sacred, but there are many other acts of consecration, the after-effects of which are far more difficult to grasp.

Thus a candidate for ordination is a different man at the end of

that ceremony, for a mark or seal has been set upon his soul : but he is not a different man after being present at a monthly consecration of his community to the Sacred Heart. Why do the two consecrations not have similar effects? In the one case, as we have seen, he took upon himself a state of life, whose obligations bring him into a special intimacy with God, in the course of a ceremony guaranteed by the Church to set up that sacred relationship. In the other case, there is no individual offering, and no acceptance needs to be expressed. The act is a re-affirmation of an acknowledged state of things. It is not intended to confer a new status of holiness on those who associate themselves in it, but to stimulate their existing devotion and fidelity.

Nevertheless, the Church has a place in her devotional life for these consecrations of a less formal order. Their nature is invocatory ; they are re-affirmations of a state of affairs already accepted and recognised as part of the common fabric of life. Thus, a congregation, a diocese, a nation, the whole world, may be consecrated by acts which have no juridical standing, and an individual too may pronounce such a consecration of himself without setting up any special relationship as a result. So in between sacramental consecrations at one extreme of the scale and simple invocations at the other, there lies a whole range of acts of consecration. These acts vary in solemnity according to what is intended, envisaged, promised, or embraced ; and they vary in binding force according to the sanctions accepted or specified. It would be a distraction from our purpose to examine the different categories among these acts of consecration, but we can extract from each of them the element which is common to them all.

A consecration is an act of the worship of God ; it is either an entry to new intimacy in God's service, or a stimulus to fidelity to duties already embraced.

#### *Consecration to Our Lady.*

Consecration properly so called is an act of latria, but there is a place for consecration in the worship which we pay to the Mother of God. Just as the consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart in 1899 could be seen as a high point in the history of devotion to the Heart of Christ, so the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1942 came as a new crowning of instinctive Catholic piety to his mother. The solemnity with which a Sodalist binds himself to Mary is due to no excess in the practice of this piety ; it is based not only on long tradition, but on sound theological principles.

Before considering briefly some of the elements which have contributed to the tradition of Marian consecration in the Church and the theological principles which justify them, we must see what place there is in the field of consecration to Our Lady for the two main types of consecration which we have just discussed.

An ordinary consecration to Our Lady, that is, an invocatory consecration, will be a re-affirmation of her high place in the economy of our salvation, and of our dependence on her help ; as such it will be



a reminder of our duty of showing her reverence and a stimulus to our devotion. A solemn consecration to Our Lady, such as that made by a Sodalist, will be a definite engagement to do something more in the cause of Christ for Mary's sake; it will be in the form of a promise of service and fidelity. What is more, it will mean that the Sodalist is entitled to look to Our Lady for special help and patronage, because he has become hers in a special way. Because of the kind of life that he embraces and the patronage that he can expect, the Sodalist is by his consecration more intimately associated with Our Lady, unless he breaks away from this engagement or from its obligations.

Studies of Mariology from the ascetical and from the archaeological point of view have shown the universality of Catholic determination to accept and proclaim the implications of Our Lady's sway over men (1). In Christian Africa, ancient Rome, medieval Europe, wherever the Church has taken root, a contribution has been made to the full picture of devotion to the Mother of God. The texts from the Fathers quoted by Pope Pius XII in the Encyclical 'Ad Caeli Reginam' (2) make it clear that the Catholic who chooses out Mary as his special patron is following a path as old and as young as the Faith itself.

It has been suggested that the form of our traditional Acts of Consecration to Our Lady and the spirit in which they should be made, can be traced back to the feudal practice of 'commendatio' (3). This was a formal, legal act by which a free man freely entered the service of a patron so as to have his protection. The contract was binding for life in a personal relationship which did not alter the free status of the weaker partner. He was bound to serve his patron in return for the protection given, but retained his former social standing. So it is in consecration to Our Lady in the Sodalities: the Sodalist asks for her protection, promises to give his service, becomes in a special way related to her, but remains God's own servant.

If this development of feudal service illustrates the manner in which a Catholic may become especially Mary's man, there is much more in the ideals of chivalry itself to illustrate the manner in which he will regard his patron. Knightly service as such is a thing of the past, but the loyalty implied by it is still a force in society, and a force which can be applied to spiritual relationships. The present-day value of Saint Ignatius's parable of the Two Standards is a case in point: and the triple colloquy which follows it in the Spiritual Exercises starts off with a petition to Our Lady as a patron who will bring her clients to an ever fuller service of her Divine Son (4). Our Lady is not only a Queen with power to protect from the devil, she is a Mother who will teach all who are willing to learn.

The Catholic, therefore, may consecrate himself to Our Lady in order to have her protection in the struggle against the devil, or, to put the matter positively, in order to have her help in taking up more effectively the cause of Christ. This is what the Sodalist does when by his Act of Consecration he enters upon the obligations of the Sodalities'

way of life. That Act is not for him an end achieved ; it is a means to an end. There are other means proposed to the Sodalist in the Rules which are now his to follow. It might be objected that in none of the traditional acts of Consecration is this made clear. The objection could be true of the Acts which bear the names of Saint John Berchmans and Saint Francis de Sales, but not when their key-words like 'patron' and 'servant' are examined and understood.

But not every act of consecration made to Our Lady is intended to set up the special relationship of patronage which we have described. Usually the words are meant to re-affirm an accepted state of things, and to act as a stimulus to thought about Our Lady as Mother and Protector. They re-affirm what every Catholic knows about the place of Our Lady in his life, but of themselves they promise nothing and make no special engagement. Yet whether the consecration is a special selection of Mary as patron or a simple invocation of her, it has its feet firmly on the ground of theology.

Mary is the Mother of God; that relationship of Mother and Son has been set up for once and for all. It is exclusively Mary's prerogative to have God as her Son, and yet it is everyone's prerogative to have Mary as his mother. Mary is the Mother of God, the Mother of Christ, Head and members. It was on Calvary that Mary was proclaimed mother of all men (Jn 19.26). Constituted mother of every human being, Mary sees us all in Christ as other Christs. Nothing is more natural than that a man should think of his mother at any time, and there is no-one else who can give him the help that she gives, for the bond between mother and child is unique. That is why a Catholic can instinctively invoke Our Lady and why he can go on to consecrate himself to her.

Mary is also a queen. Her royalty is grounded mainly on the fact that she is the Mother of God, the Mother of the King. She is also queen because of her perfection and her power, qualities which make her the patron to be sought beyond all others. She is perfect and will be true to her word, she is powerful and will help her client to be faithful to his word. Furthermore, she is able to overcome all the wiles of man's enemy. The memory of this queen will give a man fresh courage; a pact with her will give him new power.

This Queen and Mother is constantly interceding with her Son, whose good pleasure it is that graces should come to men at her request. Just as Mary was intimately associated with Christ in the work of our redemption, so now she is intimately associated with him in his mediatorship. Under God, and Christ the Mediator, there is no greater helper than Mary for the man intent on Heaven. These important truths were again set out in the Encyclical 'Ad Caeli Reginam' already referred to, but with the caution that they be treated with accurate care. It is easy to exaggerate them in enthusiasm or to belittle them in panic before the 'singular, sublime, not to say almost divine, dignity which the Angelic Doctor teaches us to ascribe to the Mother of God "by virtue



of the infinite good which is God" (5).

Consecration to Our Lady is easily misunderstood if it is allowed to slip out of the framework of Christian living. There it has a great part to play: for everyone it is a reminder of the Mother whom he loves; for the Sodalist it is an alliance with the Mother whose Son he serves. By his consecration the Sodalist acquires a particular status as Mary's protégé: he promises to serve faithfully in the cause of Christ her Son, thus sanctifying himself and others. In return he expects the patronage of a loving Mother and a powerful Queen in whatever he undertakes for God.

#### References :

- (1) Particularly well documented is the article 'Les Antécédents doctrinaux et historiques de la Consécration du Monde au Coeur Immaculé de Marie', by G. Geenen, O.P., in Volume 1 of Père du Manoir's 'Maria', Paris 1949, p. 360.
- (2) Readily accessible in the translation published by the Catholic Truth Society, London, 1955. Of particular importance are the sections 8-16 in that translation. Cf. also A.A.S. 46 (1954) num. 14-15.
- (3) The suggestion is made by Father Josef Stierli, S.J., in an article first published in 'Heerbann Mariens', May-June, 1951. An English translation by Father William Lawson, S.J. is to appear shortly.
- (4) This point is also made by Father Stierli in the article already quoted. The Sodality Act of Consecration is given a briefer examination by Père E. Villaret, S.J., in 'Les Congrégations Mariales', Volume 1, Paris 1947, pp. 354-362.
- (5) Section 32 in the C.T.S. translation.

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## CARDINAL NEWMAN AND OUR LADY

MYLES LOVELL, S.J.

That vast system of the Blessed Virgin . . . to all of us has been the special crux of the Roman system. (Pusey — Eirenicon).

A GREAT deal is being written at present about Cardinal Newman; his cause for beatification has been introduced. All this attests to the eminent place he occupied among Catholics of the last century. Some indeed consider that he is the greatest intellectual convert to Catholicism since the time of St Augustine. His was a subtle penetrating mind, able at once to embrace a vast field of information yet discern and focus the central issues of any question. In the quotation cited at the head of this essay, Dr Pusey had rightly observed that Mary is in some way the key and crux of the Roman system; how many other non-Catholics have not also protested at the 'excessive exaltation' (as they see it) of Mary. Though Newman was ever at war with liberal principles of thought in religion, he acknowledged that he was thoroughly English in his attitude to Catholicism; he had little sympathy with Faber's Italianate outlook. At this time of reunion effort, I feel that Newman's views upon Our Lady, that 'crux of the Roman system', compounded as they are of Anglican upbringing and deep theological insight, must be of particular value and interest.

Newman's conversion to the Catholic Church took place in middle life but a devotion to Mary long preceded his reception into the Church. In a sermon preached well over ten years before he became a Catholic, we find the words:

'Who can estimate the holiness and perfection of her, who was chosen to be the Mother of Christ? . . . What must have been the transcendent purity of her, whom the Creator Spirit condescended to overshadow with his miraculous prescence?' (1)

Newman's early devotion to Mary grew and deepened during the course of his long life. His 'Sermon Notes' (1849-1878) show how often he preached about Our Lady; his 'Meditations and Devotions' (published posthumously) how delicate and tender was his love and affection for her. That Newman had a Catholic mind about Our Lady no one, who has read his works, can doubt. It is not the purpose of this essay to demonstrate what is already well known; it is rather to examine those elements in his thought which bear the stamp of his own originality. Newman's particular way of looking at Catholicism permeates practically all his writings: the approach is apologetic and controversial, the standpoint is temperate and balanced, the doctrine comes from the writings of the Fathers. In speaking of Mary these three notes are seldom absent; we will consider them in more detail.

### *The Controversialist*

Apart from his sermons, much that Newman wrote had a controversial purpose. Before he became a Catholic, he was writing to defend High Anglicanism; afterwards, to justify the Church to Protestant England. When, therefore, he writes about Our Lady, he is less concerned with the question, 'What do Catholics believe about Mary?' than with the other, 'Why is it that what Catholics believe about Mary is reasonable and what Protestants believe unreasonable?' It may not come as a surprise, then, to find that, though references to Mary are frequent enough throughout Newman's works, his teaching is drawn together in two strictly controversial writings: 'The Letter addressed to Dr Pusey', and 'The Memorandum written for Mr R. I. Wilberforce'.

The Letter was in reply to Dr Pusey's Eirenicon. Newman considered that Pusey in his 'olive branch' to Catholics had seriously misrepresented their doctrine on Our Lady and felt bound to answer it. ('Difficulties of Anglicans', Volume II, first part). The Memorandum was designed to provide material which would assist Mr Wilberforce, a convert, to explain the dogma of the Immaculate Conception to Protestants. ('Meditations and Devotions', pages 117 seq).

As an illustration of Newman's approach, take the rapier thrust with which he ends the Memorandum:

'I say it distinctly — there may be many excuses at the last day, good and bad, for not being Catholics; one I cannot conceive: "O Lord the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was so derogatory to thy grace, so inconsistent with thy Passion, so at variance with thy word in Genesis and the Apocalypse, so unlike the teaching of thy first



saints and martyrs, as to give me a right to reject it at all risks, and thy Church for teaching it. It is a doctrine as to which my private judgment is fully justified in opposing the Church's judgment. And this is my plea for living and dying a Protestant'' (2).

### *His Balance*

Newman's standpoint is ever very moderate. Not that his views are negative, far from it: they are forthright and lucidly expressed: but in treating theological questions, he is little given to 'enthusiasm'. Newman's works bear witness to his very tender love for Mary but he is most careful to distinguish between Catholic devotion, by which he means the piety of the faithful, and Catholic doctrine, by which he means the official teaching of the Church. In his 'Apologia', written twenty years after he became a Catholic, we find:

'Such devotional manifestations in honour of Our Lady had been my great crux as regards Catholicism; I say frankly, I do not fully enter into them now; I trust I do not love her the less, because I cannot enter into them. They may be fully explained and defended; but sentiment and taste do not run with logic; they are suitable for Italy, but they are not suitable for England' (3).

Pusey had listed in his *Eirenicon* certain gross exaggerations, as he considered them, about our Lady; he said he had found them in Catholic works. Here are some of them: 'that the mercy of Mary is infinite; that God has resigned into her hands his Omnipotence; that it is safer to seek her than to seek her Son; that the Blessed Virgin is superior to God; that Our Lord is subject to her command; that his present disposition towards sinners is to reject them, while the blessed Mary takes his place as an advocate with Father and Son'. Newman agrees in this matter with Pusey and says in his Letter:

'I put away from me . . . as matters in which my heart and reason have no part (when taken in their literal and absolute sense, as any Protestant would naturally take them, and as the writers doubtless did not use them), such sentences and phrases . . . They seem to me like a bad dream. I could not have conceived them to be said. I know not to what authority to go for them, to Scripture, or to the Fathers, or to the Decrees of Councils, or to the consent of schools, or to the tradition of the faithful, or to the Holy See, or to reason. They defy all the *loci theologici*. . . They are like the compliment of painting up a young and beautiful princess with the brow of a Plato or the muscle of an Achilles' (4).

### *What do the Fathers say?*

Newman derives his doctrine from the Fathers. In the 1840's his problem was to find the true Church; in the 1860's his problem was to ascertain what Mary's position in that Church was. Faced with these grave theological questions, Newman in both instances went to the Fathers. What do they say? The Catholic may think that this approach is laboured; he would be inclined simply to ask what is the present teaching of the Church. Newman was equally submissive to the

living voice but his method was apologetic. It was directed to non-Catholics, mostly Anglicans, whose theological position supposedly rested upon the voice of Antiquity: Let us then go to Antiquity, says Newman, let us study exactly what the Fathers say about Mary. We shall discover that the Fathers are not Anglican in their teaching, far less Protestant; they are Catholic. So at the start of his doctrinal exposition, he sets down his standpoint:

'the Fathers are enough for me. I do not wish to say more than they suggest to me, and I will not say less' (5).

Newman had now been studying the Fathers for more than forty years; it was their writings which had brought him into the Church. It is hard to imagine anyone better qualified than the Cardinal to give us a critical and balanced view of their teaching about Mary, to tell us with authority what is the core of their message. He is looking for the 'great rudimental teaching' of Antiquity, and by that he means the *prima facie* view of her person and office, the broad outline laid down of her, the aspect under which Mary comes to us in the writings of the Fathers. *She is the Second Eve*. Through a virgin obedient to the voice of the Serpent, death came into the world; through a Virgin obedient to the voice of the Angel, life. This is the teaching of three Fathers of the pre-Nicene Church: St Justin Martyr († 165), St Irenaeus († 200), and Tertullian († c.240). Newman points out that these three represent geographically nearly the whole extent of the Church and their backgrounds give us respectively the traditional teaching of the Apostles, St James the Less, St John, and Sts Peter and Paul. It is impossible to believe that their unanimous voice witnesses to a doctrine not of apostolic origin. This early patristic teaching is confirmed by that of seven other Fathers in the succeeding centuries: St Ephrem († 378), St Cyril of Jerusalem († 386), St Epiphanius († 400), St Jerome († 420), St Augustine († 430), St Peter Chrysologus († 450), and St Fulgentius († 533). These also cover between them nearly all regions of the Church; St Augustine of course has an authority extending far wider than his own region of Africa.

According to their common teaching, we find three persons playing the dominant role in the two decisive events of world history, the Fall and the Redemption. At the Fall, there is Satan, disguised under the mask of a serpent, endeavouring by his cunning words to seduce Eve from her loyalty and obedience to God. In her folly, she listens to him and that knowingly and deliberately; she falls to his blandishments and drags Adam down with her. So death came into the world. Ever then, however, an event was predicted for the distant future in which these three would meet again, but it was to be a second Eve and a second Adam. These are Mary and Christ her Son. At the Incarnation, the second Eve, Mary, rose to the height of the tremendous angelic message; and that, as Newman underlines, with the same knowledge and deliberation as had been present in Eve's original decision. By this act of high sanctity, Mary deleted the effects of Eve's folly.

'this interpretation and the parallelism it involves seem to me undeniable . . . the parallelism is the doctrine of the Fathers from the earliest times' (6).

*What does Newman say?*

Basing himself upon the 'rudimental teaching' of the Fathers that Mary is the second Eve, Newman draws out three personal conclusions. Mary's office as the second Eve is the reason and cause: first of her sanctity, next of her dignity and third of her power of intercession.

First as to Mary's sanctity. Eve was created in grace and only lost her primeval innocence at the Fall. Mary, the second Eve, was involved with all the rest of mankind in the resulting condemnation of death, but the sentence was, in her case alone, remitted in anticipation by the merits of Christ's death upon the Cross. Christ did more for Mary than he did for any other human being; to others he grants grace and regeneration at some moment in life, to her from the very beginning. She was therefore created in a state of grace, even at the very moment of her conception, and that grace evidently at least the equal of the grace accorded to the first Eve. This at bottom, he continues, is all that the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception means; 'Mary may be called as it were a daughter of Eve unfallen'. Upon that original grace, she built; she never tarnished it by even one smallest venial sin, until in the fullness of time she was rightly described by the angel as 'full of grace' (Lk 1.28).

Second as to Mary's dignity. Newman points out that the tremendous title, the Mother of God, defined at the Council of Ephesus had been earlier used by many Fathers. Among others we find: Origen († 254), St Athanasius († 373), St Cyril of Jerusalem († 386), St Gregory of Nazianus († c390), St Gregory of Nyssa († 394), St Ambrose († 397) and St Vincent († 450). This awful title illustrates and connects together Mary's sanctity and her greatness. 'It is the issue of her sanctity; it is the origin of her greatness' (7). From it her eminent dignity may easily be inferred. However Newman adduces two further arguments; in catacomb paintings:

'Mary is there drawn with the divine Infant in her lap, she with hands extended in prayer, he with his hand in the attitude of blessing. No representation can more forcibly convey the doctrine of the high dignity of the Mother and I will add of her influence with her Son' (8).

In Scripture, too, he finds further support for his reasoning. There is in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse a striking allusion to the exalted position of a 'woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; she was with child' (12.1,2). Newman grants that, in the passage, it is the Church which is signified under the image of the woman; but he maintains that the Apostle would not have used this particular image unless there had already existed in the Church a blessed Virgin Mary, 'who was exalted



on high, and the object of veneration to all the faithful'. Later in the passage a dragon appears, standing before the woman ready to devour her child. The Scriptures open with the Serpent, Eve and Adam; they close with the dragon, the woman and child. 'Is not this confirmation of the patristic parallelism?', asks Newman.

Last, as to Mary's power of intercession. Our very relation to her must be as clients to a patron:

'In the eternal enmity which exists between the Woman and the Serpent, while the Serpent's strength lies in being the tempter, the weapon of the second Eve and Mother of God is prayer' (9).

It is primarily to her power of intercession that a Suarez or a St Alphonsus are referring when they assert that no one can be saved without the Virgin Mary. It is false to interpret them as meaning that without devotion to Mary no one can be saved. Else how could Protestants and pagans hope for salvation? Indeed there would be 'grave reasons for doubting of the salvation of St Chrysostom or St Athanasius or of the primitive martyrs; nay, I should like to know whether St Augustine in all his voluminous writings invokes her once' (10). Evidently it is natural and prudent for those who know of Mary's power through the teaching of the Church to have recourse to her, but the Church does not say that devotion to Mary, even for those who know nothing of her power, is a *sine-qua-non* of salvation.

### *Conclusion*

The Fathers taught that Our Lady was the second Eve; this parallelism, Newman continues, has been constantly maintained in the teaching of the Church; no line can logically be drawn to show where modern Catholic doctrine has overstepped the traditional view. Devotion to Mary has certainly increased among Catholics since the early centuries but doctrine has been in substance one and the same since the beginning. Those who charge Catholics with 'turning Mary into a goddess' do but demonstrate their own lack of faith in the Godhead of her Son. The antagonism of Protestants to Marian devotion — a placing of Mary at the centre, as they see it, rather than of Christ — is based upon a misconception. We look to Christ as our judge and God, we look to Mary, as Newman explains:

'without any fear, any remorse, any consciousness that she is able to read us, judge us, punish us. Our heart yearns towards that pure Virgin, that gentle Mother, . . . so weak, yet so strong; so delicate, yet so glorious; so modest and yet so mighty' (11).

Finally the Cardinal never tired of repeating that history has shown how loss of devotion to Mary has gone hand in hand with loss of faith in the divinity of her Son:

'In the Catholic Church Mary has shown herself not the rival but the minister of her Son' (12).

### **References :**

- (1) Parochial and Plain Sermons, Volume II, p. 132.

(2) *Meditations and Devotions*, p. 126.

(3) *Apologia*, p. 195.

(4) *Difficulties of Anglicans*, Volume II, p. 113.

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 25.

(6) *Ibid.*, p. 32.

(7) *Ibid.*, p. 62.

(8) *Ibid.*, p. 55.

(9) *Ibid.*, p. 73.

(10) *Ibid.*, p. 105.

(11) *Ibid.*, p. 85.

(12) *Ibid.*, p. 93.

## THE COUNCIL OF EPHESUS

LAURENCE CANTWELL, S.J.

OF all the Councils of the Church Ephesus probably features most often in edifying literature. And yet it was not a particularly edifying proceeding. Its chief protagonist, St Cyril, is sometimes proposed almost as the type of the cunning, scheming and ambitious ecclesiastic. Historians point to the spite with which he hounded his adversary Nestorius, equal in ferocity to that with which his uncle had driven Nestorius's predecessor, St John Chrysostom, into banishment. Cyril was quick to enlist the aid of the Pope with his carefully compiled dossiers of evidence against Nestorius (complete with Latin translation) and with the studied vagueness of his charges. He even managed to carry on his policy in defiance of the Emperor by a lavish expenditure of bribes on the court officials.

His conduct of the Council itself was in many way reprehensible. He styled himself the representative of the Pope, a title which might have been true a year before, but which was certainly illegitimate then, for the accredited delegates of Rome were even then on the way. There can be little doubt that the Council was carefully packed with Cyril's own sympathisers, and it was not merely impatience but also policy which led him to begin proceedings before the arrival of the Antiochene party who were less favourable to him than most of the other bishops. The very site of the Council was to his advantage. Outside Egypt Ephesus was the city in which devotion to the Theotokos was strongest; and while its bishop forbade Nestorius to preach publicly in the weeks before the Council began, Cyril was allowed to work the people up into frenzy of fervour from the pulpits of the city. Perhaps the famous torchlight processions which acclaimed the Council's decision have more in common with the Nuremburg rallies than with Lourdes. . . .

So much for the history. Theologians are equally unsympathetic to the popular notion of the Council of Ephesus as the defender of Mary's cult. To the dogmatic theologian the whole controversy was above all a Christological one. The main value of Ephesus was that it defined a theological shibboleth to distinguish the orthodox from those who denied the *communicatio idiomatum*; if you confessed not only the Nicene Creed but also that Mary was the Mother of God you were implicitly confessing the hypostatic union. But Ephesus was also a source of embarrassment in theology, and again St Cyril is held to blame. For from his repeated assertion that in Christ there was a physical union, and that in Christ there was only one nature, there arose the crisis of Chalcedon twenty years later, which led to the schism of Egypt and

Syria. Cyril's teaching was explicitly confirmed by Chalcedon, but his terminology had to be abandoned if there were to be any reply to the difficulties proposed by Eutyches.

But plausible though such a theological sketch might be, it does less than justice to one of the most decisive and critical of the Councils.

Rumours of Nestorius's disquieting teachings on the Theotokos came to Alexandria when Cyril, its influential and forceful bishop, was nearly fifty years of age. In all his many writings up to this time, including a full-scale commentary on the Gospel of St John and a book on the Trinity, he displays an extraordinary ignorance of the controversies which had raged around Christology in the century since the Council of Nicea. He was content to expound a simple anti-Arian faith, that Christ was true God and true man, a *mia phusis* of the Divine *Logos* and human *sarx*, apparently unaware that it was for the misuse of just such terms that Apollinaris of Laodicea had been condemned by the Council of Constantinople.

But unfamiliarity with the terms of the debate did no more to hinder Cyril from entering a theological controversy than did his advancing years. And there were more personal reasons too. Nestorius hailed from Antioch, traditionally the enemy of Alexandria ever since Athanasius had been fiercely persecuted by Arians from that city. Nestorius was now archbishop of the upstart metropolitan see of Constantinople whose claims to be the new Rome in the ecclesiastical as well as the secular sphere were threatening Alexandria's traditional supremacy in the East. Nestorius too was the personal appointment of the Emperor, favoured above the candidate of the Alexandrian faction in the capital.

And now Nestorius had the temerity to challenge the orthodoxy of the title 'Mother of God', saying that it smacked of paganism. Cyril's own predecessor, Alexander, had used the term over a century before, and in this he was merely borrowing from established liturgical usage. In Egypt, at least, recitation of the prayer, 'Under thy patronage O holy Mother of God . . .' was an immemorial custom.

But the Antiochenes had been notorious quibblers on the subject even in the past. Though Eustathius had used the title Theotokos without reservation at much the same time as Alexander, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodore of Tarsus had found it necessary to qualify it by the phrase 'in respect of the union'. Mary was only *Christotokos* 'in respect of the nature.' But if the reports that were circulating in Alexandria were to be believed, Nestorius went further still. He was teaching that the title was blasphemous, that Mary was in no sense the Mother of God, but only the mother of the man who was the instrument of God. Whether these rumours did justice to the teaching of Nestorius is not the point here. It was sufficient for Cyril that 'terrible disturbances had broken out' among the monks who lived within his jurisdiction.



tion. Certain individuals were 'going around corroding their simple faith' by questioning whether the Blessed Virgin should be called the Mother of God.

It was less remarkable that Cyril should have written a letter to instruct the monks in a matter of faith than that he should have considered this a matter of faith at all. It is clear both in this letter and in all Cyril's many sermons and writing in the course of the next two years that he did not regard the Theotokos simply as a pious opinion which Christians were at liberty to hold or not as they pleased, as for example St Basil considered the perpetual virginity of Our Lady to be. Nor was it merely important as a safeguard of the orthodox doctrine concerning Christ, but it was itself a part of 'the ancient faith handed on to the churches by the holy Apostles'.

Though addressed primarily to the monks of Egypt the letter had its greatest effect in Constantinople itself. The metropolis was already in turmoil when it arrived. Nestorius was showing himself favourable to the flotsam and jetsam of the Empire; Alexandrian malcontents and refugee Pelagians alike found him a friendly and influential patron, while his own clergy and people were becoming increasingly estranged. Some priests were refusing to celebrate the Liturgy in his company, while once a whole congregation would not receive Communion because the preacher had declared, 'Anathema to him who calls Mary the Mother of God!' The archbishop's opponents received clear arguments and welcome moral support when Cyril's letter was circulated among them, and it is not surprising that Nestorius should have been irritated. Whether he was justified in calumniating Cyril before the Emperor is another matter.

But though Nestorius was certain of support from the Emperor, he remained consistently an object of suspicion to Pope Celestine. He wrote repeatedly to Rome asking in terms of the greatest respect for guidance in the affair of the Pelagian exiles, and for support in his campaign against the heretical Theotokos title. It was caution rather than curial indolence that brought no reply, for the Pope knew that the western heretics had been publicly condemned in Constantinople eight or nine years before, and Nestorius could hardly have been ignorant of the fact; and though the title *Dei Genetrix* was little used in the West, its passionate denial could not but sound suspicious. In any case it was to Cyril and not to Nestorius that Celestine wrote to find out the true situation.

Cyril, encouraged by this mark of confidence and prodded by his own enthusiastic supporters, sent a stern letter of reproof to Nestorius. He was willing however to overlook all his other misdemeanours if only he would publicly acknowledge Mary as Theotokos. On receiving a cool but not impolite refusal to his first heated letter, Cyril repeated his demand, but this time with much closer argumentation and in more conciliatory terms. This second letter, the famous *Kataphluarousi*, shows the enormous advance in understanding of the theology of the Incarna-

tion which Cyril had made in the previous eighteen months. It is a competent and precise document, and if there remains some confusion of the critical words *phusis*, *hupostasis* and *prosôpon* the fault is due to the tradition to which he was trying to be faithful. He escapes all suspicion of Apollinarianism by explicit mention of the rational soul of Christ. His exposition of the Nicene Creed cannot be faulted. The phrase 'who was born of the Virgin Mary' refers not to 'one Lord Jesus Christ', but distinctly to the 'true God of true God'. Nestorius had claimed that the title Theotokos made Mary the Mother of the Divinity and therefore a goddess; and this charge Cyril refutes by emphasising not only that the Word was begotten in his divine nature before all ages, but further that he had no *need* of human birth, 'an opinion which it would be ridiculous and impious to hold'.

But underlying Nestorius's error was a complete misunderstanding of the union of divine and human in Christ. Cyril puts his finger on the central point when he shows that the union is not just a moral union 'in the will or in the good pleasure' of the Word, nor the 'assumption of a human person' (*proslêpsis prosôpou*), for such a doctrine would 'divide the one Lord Jesus Christ into two Sons'. On the other hand he forestalls the accusation of making Christ neither God nor man, but rather a mixture of the two, for the 'distinction between the two natures is not destroyed by the union'. In the light of this doctrine 'the holy fathers had confidently proclaimed the Blessed Virgin to be the Mother of God', and Nestorius is exhorted to follow their example 'that peace should be maintained between the churches and that the bond of concord and peace should remain indissoluble between the priests of God'.

And there the matter might have been settled had not Nestorius been so confident of the powerful favour of the Emperor. His reply is a clumsy restatement of his old misgivings with regard to the Theotokos and ends with a smug assurance that church affairs in Constantinople were getting better every day, and that the imperial household were quite satisfied with his exposition of doctrine.

It was not in Cyril's pugnacious nature to retire from the conflict at the mere mention of powerful enemies, but he was too prudent not to try to win them over. At the same time as he was enlisting the support of Rome and Antioch in a common front against Nestorius he addressed three short treatises 'On the True Faith' to the Emperor and his family, never mentioning Nestorius by name but clearly opposing his doctrine. One treatise might have succeeded where three failed. Theodosius was angry that Cyril should have written separately to his sister Pulcheria who was already much too influential for her brother's liking. He was therefore only too willing to accede to the request of all parties in the capital for a Council to decide once and for all on Nestorius's orthodoxy and also to pass judgment on Cyril's alleged mistreatment of his subjects. The Council was to meet in Ephesus at Pentecost the following year.

But meanwhile the forces of the whole Church were massing against Constantinople. Even John of Antioch agreed that Nestorius should retract, while Pope Celestine gave Cyril authority to excommunicate him if he did not.

It was in executing this commission that Cyril made his second great blunder. The twelve anathemas in which he couched the ultimatum were orthodox enough if read in conjunction with the synodal letter which they summarised, but taken alone they could easily suggest what was later to be called Monophysitism. John of Antioch certainly read them in that unfavourable light and instantly transferred his support back to his friend and compatriot Nestorius. Encouraged by this turn of events and confident that the forthcoming Council would condemn Cyril as the Emperor wished, Nestorius ignored Cyril's ultimatum and replied by twelve counter-anathemas.

The deadlock was complete. For all their literary and diplomatic activity in the subsequent six months neither side was able to affect the situation much. And it must be conceded that Nestorius seemed to be in the more favourable position. He arrived in Ephesus long before the other delegations, in the company of ten suffragan bishops and the captain of the imperial bodyguard, who was there to keep order, and no doubt to see that the Emperor's purpose in convening the Council was not frustrated. That purpose was the humiliation of Cyril for daring to attribute influence and authority to the ladies of the imperial household. It had been unwise of Cyril to try to make use of the tensions between Theodosius and his sister.

No wonder then that when he arrived a few days before Pentecost 431 with a vast delegation of fifty bishops, Cyril used every means he could to ensure the frustration of the Emperor's plans. Admittedly his methods were not always unexceptionable and he showed little sense of fair play. But in his defence it may be questioned whether his opponents would have been any more merciful to him if they had had the opportunity. Nestorius had already proved himself obdurate when offered the chance of retracting without loss of honour; the 156 bishops of Cyril's Council were not therefore unjust in condemning him when he refused to appear before them.

But things got really out of hand when John of Antioch eventually arrived, and in company with Nestorius's party set up a splinter Council of his own. Anathemas sparked this way and that. Finally the Emperor's personal delegate intervened, imprisoned Cyril on his own authority, and refused to recognise the first Council because of its neglect of protocol and the second because it was too small. A select committee of bishops was called to Chalcedon where it would be under the Emperor's eye. For all Cyril's vast expenditure on presents for the Emperor's entourage he was unable to obtain a place on this committee though he was released from prison.

Very little was achieved beyond the deposition and exile of Nestorius for heresy. The Antiochene party persisted in regarding Cyril's



anathemas as heretical, and two years elapsed before peace was restored to the Church by what is sometimes called the Creed of Ephesus or Symbolum Unionis. This creed, composed by Cyril as a compromise between his own theology and that of Antioch, shows how much the emphasis had shifted since the beginning of the crisis. The Antiochenes found no difficulty in the Theotokos, but disputed the 'monophysite' flavour of Cyril's language, and Cyril had to sacrifice much that was most typical of him before he could find a formula which the other side would accept.

In time to come the Church would confirm that Ephesus was a General Council, but when we ask what exactly it defined it is not easy to say. It condemned Nestorius indeed, but it is not at all clear that it condemned Nestorianism. It ratified Cyril's Christology, but it did not bind the Church to adopt his terminology. The only dogmatic point which was decisively settled was that Mary is truly the Mother of God.

Was it then a Marian Council as modern devotional writers would have us think? Certainly it did not have the principal purpose of proclaiming the honour of Our Lady. But while it was mainly interested in safeguarding the teaching of Nicea on the Incarnation, it found it could do this only by vindicating a title which popular devotion had already conferred on Mary. As early as the third General Council the Church had proved that the faith of Christ could only be protected by a right attitude to his Mother. When Cyril first took up his pen at Easter 429 he was ill-equipped to expound the metaphysics of the Incarnation; but he was convinced (and later study only confirmed the conviction) that it is impossible to be an orthodox Christian and deny the honour due to Mary as the Mother of God.

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## ABSTRACTS

La Vierge et l'Eucharistie, par E. Boularand, S.J. (*Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique* 34 (1958) 3-27, 361-392).

Abstract by Colum Lavelle, S.J.

**C**ONSIDERATION of Christ's redemptive act on Calvary is necessary for an understanding of his action in the Mass. In the Mass however his action will be adapted to the special manner of his presence. Similarly to understand Mary's part in the Mass we must first briefly consider her part in our redemption.

Her immaculate conception set her apart from sinful humanity and prepared her to be the Mother of God. It is as the Mother of God that she contributes to our redemption. On Calvary it is not her physical presence but rather as it were her presence in her Son that is important. She is present by her maternal relationship with her Son. It is this relationship which gives special significance to her being there. As Christ's Mother she is the human intermediary between him and all mankind. Since we receive our Saviour through her, she is the spiritual Mother of men and the scope of her intercession is universal.

While we may say that the victim of Calvary came from Mary's flesh, no material element of the consecrated species at Mass can be said to come from Mary. She is present in a manner different from that in which she was present on Calvary.

At Mass Mary is not physically present. She cannot see Christ corporeally as his presence is a substantial one which cannot be perceived by the senses. She sees him by means of the supernatural intelligence which in contemplating the Divine Essence sees all things supernatural. That she does see God face to face and thereby understands the cross and the Eucharist is the consequence of her motherhood of Christ.

Mary is also the Mother of all God's children and just as her divine maternity brought her knowledge of things divine so her motherhood of men will bring her knowledge of men. The depth of her knowledge cannot be infinite as God's knowledge is, but there is no limit to the extent of her knowledge of the present and future needs of the Church and of the graces which God intends to bestow.

The Blessed Eucharist is pre-eminent among God's gifts. It is clear to her who has shared so closely in his Passion how fitting it is that the Church should possess such a memorial and with what treasures of love it is enriched. With sight more piercing than that of the doctors and more enlightened than that of the angels Mary sees how this sacrament expresses the power, the wisdom, and the infinity of God. More than any other she sees the source, the manner, and the grandeur of this mystery. She understands men's need of the Eucharist that it may unite them in Christ's Mystical Body.

By her knowledge Mary is present at Mass, but she also helps us to participate by her example. When she stood at the foot of the cross

she entered into Christ's sufferings and offered them in union with him. She understood the purpose and experienced the effects of this sacrifice which was the climax of the mysteries of the Incarnation. In her union with Christ's offering at Mass she is our exemplar for this life, and in her enjoyment of the Beatific Vision she gives us hope for the life to come. It matters not that the Gospels do not tell us whether she tasted the Bread of Life when we know that she tastes the joy of Eternal Life of which it is the pledge.

Mary has received untold graces perfecting her union with Christ our Head and so is a symbol of the whole Church. Each and every member will find in her the ideal to which he is especially called.

The priest will see the priestly spirit in her. When offering he should strive to imitate the dispositions of her heart; her undefiled purity, her desire to expiate for the sins of men, and with loving generosity to offer sacrifice to God in union with Christ. Jesus offering himself to the Father was a high priest, holy, innocent, and undefiled. With him was the Virgin without stain.

As it is on behalf of Christ that the priest is acting at Mass it is more especially of the faithful participating at Mass that Mary is the model. Like them Mary is no priest and yet she lives this mystery perfectly in her heart. Her praise and thanksgiving to God, her longing for the purification of men and her unceasing intercession show us the heights to which we are called.

She shows us how we must prepare ourselves to receive Christ who is the food of our soul. Present at the altar with her purity and love her humility and sweetness, Mary teaches us how we must approach Christ.

This mother exercises a special influence over the heart of her Son. She knows that he who is the fulfilment of all our heart's desires is altogether ours. Through him we can adore and praise God, bless him and give him thanks as we ought. She will seek to unite us with Jesus and he will heed her longing for our sanctification, her wish that we be united with God and with one another.

Our Lady and Islam (*Herder-Korrespondenz* (XIII) April 1959).

Abstract by Johannes Appel, S.J.

THE study of Islam's attitude to Mary arises from the need to find new and effective methods of spreading Christ's cause in Islam countries. Nationalist movements are not alone in influencing political conditions; among Mohammedans that ancient heritage, the concept of theocracy, is again playing a more important part in Islam. Advances in the cultural plane have to be brought into line with the religious consciousness of the ruling powers. This is a situation which the Church recognises as a threat to her long-tolerated existence, for the scope of her religious activity has always been confined to the educational field.



Stronger efforts for mutual understanding have to be made. As a first step, representatives of both Christians and Mohammedans in 1949 emphasised the need for co-operation. Communism, the enemy which both religions fight, seemed to serve as a basis for talks to start with. Encouraged by the triumphant welcome given to the statue of Our Lady of Fatima in countries with predominantly Islamic populations, both sides agreed that further mutual understanding was possible. Meetings in 1954 and 1956 in Bhamdoun in the Lebanon, and in 1955 in Alexandria, were encouraging, but no definite results could be obtained.

But does good will on both sides blind our eyes to the facts? The small, almost negligible, number of converts so far seems rather discouraging from one point of view; on the other hand, converts from Syria, for example, declared that the study of Mariology in Islamic tradition eased their way into the Catholic Church. We should be careful not to draw general conclusions from this experience. A complete understanding of Mohammedan doctrine discloses the almost unbridgeable gaps which separate Islam from Catholicism. The Mohammedan concepts of God, of the Incarnation and the Redemption, have first to be analysed with great care if we are to avoid quite false conclusion derived from Islamic devotion to Our Lady.

The Mohammedan regards God as absolutely transcendent. Human concepts cannot even inadequately attain or describe his essence; the analogy of being and knowledge is clearly rejected. There is no further relationship between God and ourselves apart from the mere fact of creation. Man is necessarily predestined, a doctrine which contradicts free will. Man's purpose is to be faithful to God. If he fails he will be condemned to Hell. True conversion in time, however, makes him 'redeem' himself, so there is no need for a Redemption as conceived in Christian teaching.

For Islam, the Blessed Trinity does not exist; God made the 'God-Son', who is therefore a creature, although distinguished as the first of all creation, the 'word' of God, as they say. God himself cannot become man, for he is absolutely transcendent. He gives man no supernatural share in his divine life, although Islam does employ the term 'grace'.

We must bear all this in mind if we are to interpret the high position of Our Lady in Islamic tradition. Mary is denied the title Mother of God, for Christ her son is just man. Born untouched by Satan, she lived free from any sin as the chosen one of God. She conceived by the Spirit of God, remaining a virgin. Christ's birth is an act of God comparable with the creation of Adam. According to tradition, Mohammed is said to have given his opinion in a letter to the Emperor of Abyssinia in these terms: 'I testify that Jesus the son of Mary is God's Spirit and his Word, which was sent forth by God into Mary the Virgin, the most pure. She conceived Jesus of his Spirit and his Breath, she who had been created in just the same way as God

created Adam with his own hand'.

It is not surprising to learn that the Emperor did not find any essential difference between the teaching of the Church and that of the new prophet. He did not see the great gap between Christian and Islamic belief, because they employ almost the same words in their doctrines. However, the study of Mohammedanism makes it strikingly obvious that an alien belief can be similar to the teaching of the Church, but at the same time poles apart.

Jesus and Mary play an important part in the Koran, in tradition, and in the religious practice of the people of Islam. One reason is certainly that in Mohammed's time some Christian centres in North and South Arabia exercised quite a considerable influence. Future apostles, however, should not overestimate the significance of this: for the same words represent fundamentally divergent beliefs. Christians and Mohammedans at prayer before the same statue of Our Lady in a Catholic church do not share the same faith. The process of easing the way towards a better understanding of our faith has to begin with the living example. It is the contact with a Christian layman, fervent with zeal and following the example of Our Lady in humility and fidelity, which seems to be the most persuasive argument.

Finally success may, we hope, be obtained by the help of Our Lady who as Queen of the Missions watches with motherly care over the work of her Son. Pope Pius XII reaffirmed this hope in his Encyclica 'Evangeliu Praecones': 'Mary on Calvary took all mankind under her motherly care: she loves and cares no less for those who are still unaware of their redemption through Christ than for those who already enjoy the benefits of Christ's salvation'.

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*Mary in Protestant Theology and Worship.* By Paul F. Palmer, S.J.  
Abstracted from Theological Studies 15 (1954) 519-540 by Pete Banyard, S.J.

**M**AX THURIAN, a member of the Reformed Calvinist Church of France, has pinpointed the whole problem of Mary's place in Protestant theology by asking 'what Protestant does not tremble on hearing the phrase "the Blessed Virgin Mary"?' Throughout the early heresies of the Church, Mary's position in relation to her Divine Son was queried. Docetists denied the reality of Christ's humanity: Gnostics would have nothing of a true human birth. Faustus, the champion of the Manichees, maintained that the virgin overshadowed by the Holy Spirit was the virgin earth. In order to establish fully the prerogative of her Son against the Arians, the council of Ephesus hailed Mary as 'Theotokos'. Cyril of Alexandria calls Mary the 'sceptre of orthodoxy'.

Orthodoxy is essentially a thing of the mind but is also a thing of the heart: Mary has to be accepted corde et animo. The Protestant reformers began by accepting her in mind. The Confession of Augsburg

1530) stated that Christ assumed a true human nature from the womb of the Blessed Virgin, and the Formula of Concord (1579) said that by virtue of her motherhood of the Son, Mary was 'laudatissima', worthy of most praise, and truly 'Theotokos'. Even Luther began by invoking Mary's assistance and hoping for a full understanding of the 'Magnificat'. However he changed his tune; first by saying that too much honour was given to Mary with a consequent lessening of honour due to Christ, and then by rejecting the communion of saints in its proper sense and restricting it to members of the Church on earth. In England Puritan iconoclasm helped to increase the distrust some felt for the Creed which contained Mary's name and Newman sees a lesson in history — to reject the Mother often leads to a very lukewarm attitude to her Son.

The views of three Neo-Orthodox theologians must be mentioned. Paul Tillich holds that Mary is neither Mother of God nor Mother of Christ, but the mother of Jesus of Nazareth who, as an historical person has no relevance to the foundation of Christian belief. Emil Brunner accepts wholeheartedly the fact of the Incarnation, 'Vere Deus, vere homo' but he rejects the manner of it by questioning the historicity of the early chapters of Matthew and Luke. And so he rejects the virgin birth, adding that since the Apostles did not teach it, it does not belong to the 'Kerygma' of the Church. Karl Barth, on the other hand, regards the virgin birth as a central doctrine of Christian faith. As yet Barth has not reached the point in his marathon 'Church Dogmatics' where he promises to treat fully the whole question and we have to content ourselves with incidental references to it.

The World Council of Churches includes not only Protestants but also members of the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches and so the issue of Mary's relevance in Christian worship has been raised. The Council having agreed that the question was primarily a liturgical one, a report, 'Ways of Worship', was drawn up on the Commission of Faith and Order's prepared agenda for the World Conference at Lund in 1952. Four standpoints were given: the Catholic, the Anglican, the Orthodox and that of the reformed Calvinist Church. The Rev. T. M. Parker in presenting the Anglican view urges an acceptance of what is common in the tradition of East and West concerning Mary. Max Thurian's contribution on the Reformed Calvinist view is what interests us most here. He begins with what he thinks is the fundamental difficulty which faces all ecumenical thought on the subject: how can the silence about Mary in the early centuries of the Church be reconciled with the vast growth of traditional honour of Mary? Professor Lossky, of the Orthodox Church, answers the problem by pointing out that Churches which reject the idea of tradition in every form are also alien to the cult of the Mother of God. Tradition, he says, is something much richer than a mere oral transmission of facts: it tells us how we are to accept revealed truth and implies the constant working of the Holy Spirit in the Church. However Lossky has a surprising attitude to the Immaculate Conception. Contrary to the old Greek Orthodox tradition,



he maintains that Mary was only sanctified from the time of the Annunciation and he twists the patristic Eve-Mary theme to suit his theory: as Eve fell at the first whisper of the serpent, so Mary was sanctified at the first words of the Angel. Thus Mary was born under the law of original sin. This reduction of Mary to the level of fallen humanity has been a characteristic tendency of Protestant thought from Luther onwards. Thurian himself reveals it by taking the Purification of Mary to have been really necessary. He also objects to the doctrine of the Assumption on the grounds that it tends to put Mary out of and above the Church. This raises a further problem with regard to Christ's risen humanity, for if Mary is raised above the Church, then, a fortiori, so must be her glorified son. Thurian must find the solution.

It would be wrong to conclude that Thurian's contribution to Protestant Mariology is wholly negative, for he is anxious to introduce Mary into Protestant piety and worship, (he would like a feast of Mary Mother of God, on August 15th). He does not suggest praying to Mary because that would be contrary to Reformed tradition. On the other hand there is the difficulty presented by the fact that we pray for and intercede for one another as members of the communion of saints in the church on earth, so why should we not ask the intercession with Christ of those saints who are now in Heaven? 'The great litany of the saints is the most moving and the strongest ecumenical prayer. And Mary is present at the head of this general assembly of the Church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven' (Ways of Worship p. 371). Thurian urges his fellow Protestants to put aside their Mariological fears and to face up to the text which says 'Behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed'. Should Protestants follow where Thurian would lead them, Catholic Mariology would no longer remain 'the most agonizing problem for ecumenical thought'.

*On Devotion to St Joseph.* By Karl Rahner, S.J.

Abstracted from *Geist und Leben* 30 (1957) 14-22 by Wolfgang Thamm, S.J.

**V**ENERATION of St Joseph as practised in the last three centuries was unknown to the early Church, which saw only Mary, the Apostles and John the Baptist in immediate connection with Jesus. These and only these were understood to have carried out together with Jesus the work of salvation. But nobody will deny that the place of Joseph takes in our devotion exceeds to a large extent that of the Baptist and of the Apostles, especially since St Joseph was declared patron of the whole Church. What justifies this great devotion? The first chapter of St. Matthew calls Joseph a 'right-minded man', which can be understood as a canonization. He was the spouse of Our Lady and the foster-father of Jesus. But all this does not explain his position in the Church. The question is: was St Joseph a Saint as many other

or had he a special vocation to participate in God's work of salvation just as Mary, the Baptist and the Apostles had?

In order to give an answer to that question we have to consider Mt 1, 18-24.

And this was the manner of Christ's birth. His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, but they had not yet come together, when she was found to be with child, by the power of the Holy Ghost. Whereupon her husband Joseph (for he was a right-minded man, and would not have her put to open shame) was for sending her away in secret. But hardly had this thought come to his mind, when an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take thy wife Mary to thyself, for it is by the power of the Holy Ghost that she has conceived this child; and she will bear a son whom thou shalt call Jesus, for he is to save his people from their sins. . . . And Joseph awoke from sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, taking his wife to himself; . . .

The common interpretation of these verses tells us that Joseph realized his spouse was pregnant, but that he could not find an explanation and therefore wanted to leave her. Some try a subtle psychological explanation why they never talked about it and why Joseph wanted to leave her. But it is not very convincing. Is this interpretation right? First of all the text says 'she was found to be with child, by the power of the Holy Ghost'. Everybody agrees that it was presumed to be Joseph by whom she was 'found to be with child', and that the words 'by the power of the Holy Ghost' are an addition by the author as a fact which he knew but Joseph was to be told later. This is completely unjustified. Why should Joseph not have asked Mary and why should Mary not have told him about her great vocation? As a 'just man' he could not have expected a miracle, and since Mary wanted to stay with him, she must have been anxious to tell him about the origin of the child.

That Joseph was explicitly told by the angel what had happened to Mary does not exclude the possibility that he had learned the fact from her already. The angel's message is but an affirmation of what Joseph had been told before. Why did Joseph plan to send her away in secret? If he had not known the origin of Mary's pregnancy, whether he thought of an immoral cause or not, it would not have been an act of special 'justice' to send her away secretly. A far more convincing interpretation is, that Joseph wanted to send her away because he knew that her child was of divine origin and as a 'right-minded man' he planned to retire from her, since he saw that she belonged to God. He no longer had a claim to her. He did not want to interfere between her and God. This also gives an answer to the question, why he planned to send her away in secret. If he had done this publicly she would have been under suspicion of having been unfaithful to her spouse.

Thus the parenthesis that he 'would not have her put to open

shame' does not explain why he would have left her, but why he would have done so *in secret*. Therefore Joseph did not think as the traditional 'Josephology' has taught: I am the father of this child, because it was born in my family, though through a divine miracle. As soon as he realized what had happened between God and his spouse, he was sure he had to retire, since he considered himself as not taking part in these events.

But then something happens which changes Joseph's position completely: the appearance of the angel. Through this appearance he becomes the spouse of Mary and the father of the child. He receives a vocation which binds him to the Holy Family in a deeper way than natural relationship does. He is taken into God's plan of salvation just like the Baptist or the Apostles. Modern devotion to St Joseph, therefore, may be seen to have a scriptural justification.



## REVIEWS

*Inspiration in the Bible.* By Karl Rahner, S.J. pp. 80. Herder/Nelson. 1961. 10s. 6d

THE problem that Father Rahner writes about is more than that of inspiration. 'For if one single theological problem can stir up the whole of theology, we may be sure that it has been correctly asked' (p. 34). He begins, indeed, by bringing out the difficulties involved in the particular statement that the Scriptures (for the moment understood in the sense of the New Testament) are inspired by God. Does inspiration mean merely that a man is given a message that he writes down in much the same way that a secretary receives dictation? We are certainly not compelled to hold such a view. An adequate definition would only involve divine activity whereby a man becomes certain of something although he may not be aware that he is being inspired. Did Saint Paul himself regard his short note to Philemon as an inspired pronouncement of the Holy Ghost? Surely not. It should be added here that God's will in the matter of inspiration is not only co-operative but also pre-determining, in scholastic terminology, a *predeterminatio formalis*. God is truly the literary author but nevertheless not only tolerates human authorship, in the normal and full sense of the word, but demands it and is also formally different from it. While the man is writing what to him is his own book, God conceives, wills and accomplishes the book by formal predefinition.

Father Rahner then asks how did the Church know which books of the time of the Apostolic church were inspired. He rejects historically unverifiable hypotheses such as the suggestion that one of the Apostles revealed what writings were so to be considered. But we do need some concrete historical notion how the Church did know this. His last major problem is the relationship between inspired and canonical writing on the one hand and the teaching authority and tradition of the Church on the other. If there are two interpretations of one text and she teaches that one is correct and the other is wrong, we might in justice ask what need was there of a text in the first place. On the other hand if the Biblical teaching is both explicit and infallible, why do we need a teaching authority to support it. If, too, there is a teaching authority quite independent of the Bible, why cannot it infallibly select from the many opinions of human tradition, such as the oral history of the Christian events, what has been revealed by God and publish it to the world? One answer would be to separate the two in time. In the Apostolic Church we are to stick to tradition, the oral testimony of salvation through Christ. After the time of the Apostolic Church we have this oral tradition replaced by the Bible, and one teaching authority fully subordinated to the Bible, with as much authority as is supported by the Bible. But any individual member of the Church of the present would be able to appeal to the Church of the future which might know more about the Bible. Another possible answer would be that the two

authorities are simultaneous, but, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, one does not contradict the other. It would involve always understanding the Scriptures in the very sense in which they were written and there would be no question of intrinsic relationships and mutual reference between them. The danger of this lies in seeing dogmas as bare statements of truth without that richer measure of meaning which an interpreting and teaching Church provides and which the multitude of men demand.

If the teaching authority, after the time of the Apostolic Church, derives its doctrine from two sources where the oral testimony contains elements not to be found in the Scriptures, then these two sources cannot be seen as two elements of the same nature, constituting itself clearly in both. But such a two-sources theory is but a possible interpretation of the doctrine given at the Council of Trent which is not supported by the unanimous opinion of the Fathers, or of the medieval theologians. Moreover it could not claim general consent in the post-Tridentine period.

Father Rahner begins his answer to the problems outlined above by making a distinction between the Church created by God and his other creations, such as the sun and its movements through space and time. The Divine works in 'nature' precede any acts of creaturely freedom. 'However, if something comes into being which is a free act of man or results from it, and, nevertheless, is absolutely predefined by God, and thus miraculously delimited from the normal run of things, we can no longer speak merely of the world as something willed by God, but must recognise that, within the world, at certain spatio-temporal points, there is some qualitatively preferential will at work, the terminus of a divine action, having spatio-temporal distinctiveness within the world, and thus assigning this quality to the divine action itself . . . In other words, the works of the history of redemption are God's in some other, higher way than the works of nature. In the latter, God deals with the (historical) world, in the former he enacts his own history in the world' (p. 41). Thus the Church is his own because it is such a work of formal predefinition in the space-time continuum and having a redemptive purpose. Furthermore the Apostolic Church is subject to a divine intervention which differs from the further preservation of the Church in the course of history. The Church had a beginning in time and space and a continuance therein, but that which comes later is based upon earlier events. By this earlier foundation is not however Christ alone, but also the community which he had gathered round him, and on which he bestowed his spirit on the first Pentecost. Thus God does not merely institute the Church and keep her in being for ever, but he keeps her in being by that very act of institution at a particular period of time. God, insofar as he is the founder of the Church, has a unique relationship to the first generation of the Church, which he has not in the same qualitative sense to other periods, or rather which he has to these only through the medium of that earlier period. The Apostolic Church is the

law according to which the whole course of the later Church is being steered.

Now this original institution is not the work of a moment but may be measured as a period of physical time. Thus that Church whose mission it is *only* to conserve and to interpret revelation did not exist as such at Pentecost. There was revelation even after Pentecost. Thus the original institution of the Church may be regarded as a qualitatively unique work of God, which because it took place over a period of historical time, can be seen to be made up of various historical elements in terms of that divine activity. The New Testament is one of those constitutive and historical elements. It does not originate only as God's word to man but is a genuine self-expression and written embodiment of what the primitive Church believed. To deny this would be to deny that the New Testament authors were real authors and would be to reduce them to mere secretaries. The writings of the New Testament originate as life processes of the primitive Church, manifestations of communal life such as letters, sermons and exhortations. The Scriptures thus share the function of the Apostolic Church of being a norm for the later Church and are not separate neutral factors introduced from the outside. It follows that, in creating through his absolute will the Apostolic Church and her constitutive elements, God wills and creates the Scriptures in such a way that he becomes their inspiring originator, their author.

From what has been said it will be clear that God has this claim of authorship not only in the way that he can claim to be the author of the sun and its movement but insofar as he has intervened in the space-time historical process and directed it into an actuality which his will prefers to other possible orders. I suspect that Father Rahner's most important point resides in the footnote to page sixty-one where he refers to a deepened concept of efficient grace which would also include this spatio-temporal redemptive factor, 'grace as grace which is always the grace of the incarnate Word, grace which always includes reference to faith, which derives from its acceptance in history, grace which is always grace of the Church going out from her — and tending towards her.' In other words a concept of grace which is closely linked to inspiration, and to the idea of a preferential divine order. One has to go back to Molina to see a similar doctrine. It is considerations such as these which led me to quote at the beginning, 'For if one single theological problem can stir up the whole of theology, we may be sure that it has been correctly asked.'

But to return to the particular problems on hand. It must be noted that Father Rahner puts the Old Testament aside in his considerations and it is not until page fifty-one that he devotes his attention to the relationship between his theory and the older books of Scripture. It is then only to devote three or four pages to the problem. The nub of his answer lies in this, that 'the Scriptures of the Old Testament were ultimately produced by God inasmuch as they were to have (and



preserve) their validity and function in the New Testament.' Their essence could not be completed until the writing of these later Scriptures. They are what the French call *en fonction de* the New Testament. Now I am not at all sure that such an answer will satisfy the scholars of the ancient books, but then again I am not at all sure that that is criterion of what is or is not good theology.

The other problems which I have outlined earlier are dealt with by Father Rahner in the light of his thesis but I think I have written enough to suggest what his answers will be. For those who wish to pursue this subject further I recommend them to this provoking and stimulating book.

M. Nevin, S.J.

*An Introduction to the Old Testament.* Eleven leaflets in an illustrated folder. By the Bellarmine Society, Heythrop College, Oxon. 1961. Pp. 44. 1/-.

**S**TART at the beginning and go on reading till you come to the end and then stop. Is this the way to read the Bible? Until recently the question hardly troubled Catholic laymen, since so few ever opened the Bible to read it. The New Testament was not entirely neglected because it became familiar from being read in English from the pulpit on a Sunday. But most English Catholics opened the Old Testament only out of curiosity when visiting some old Protestant church.

Of late, however, interest in the Old Testament has been awakened mainly owing to the encouragement of the late Pope and to new translations.

The Bellarmine Society's new set of leaflets makes a timely appearance. Its purpose is not to present a commentary which will replace the reading of the Bible, but to help ordinary Catholics to read and understand the word of God. The leaflets themselves fit easily into most bibles and unless one has a bible open when using them they are of little value. Few actual quotations from Scripture are given, but one's reading is guided by numerous references, and at the end of most sections (why not all?) are references 'for further reading' for those who want to go deeper into a subject. The whole set is contained in a most attractive folder with some excellent maps in two colours.

The leaflets do not start with Genesis and work through the Bible book by book, as if one could use a library by starting at the door and reading one's way along the shelves. First of all two of the leaflets deal with fundamental attitudes to the Bible, which will affect the whole of one's reading of it: to what extent it is the word of God, whether it is allegory or history, how far its message is intended for us as well as for the Jews. Another three of the leaflets explain the content and general layout of the Old Testament. But by far most of the leaflets are devoted to particular important themes that run all the way through the Old Testament, and right into the New Testament where they are

fulfilled. A Messiah was promised, and these promises reveal to us the character of our Saviour. A Covenant was made by God with the Jews, and that Covenant is extended and confirmed in the Church of Christ and will be completed in heaven.

The New Testament is thus the fulfilment of the Old. The two cannot be understood independently one of the other, for the New Testament was written for Jews or for Christians who had learnt the facts of the Old Testament when being instructed for baptism. The Bellarmine Leaflets work the other way round to suit the Catholics of to-day. They assume a certain familiarity with the New Testament and show how the Old was leading up to it. All the leaflets reflect the expectancy of the coming of our Lord and shine new light on old familiar Gospel scenes.

Because the Bible leads us towards Christ, it can never be just a subject for study, but is a prayer to be used. The list of readings 'for various occasions' will always be a useful guide, even when this *Introduction* has helped its readers over those first difficult steps and become self redundant.

*Michael Barrow, S.J.*

With this number Volume 2 of 'Bellarmine Commentary' is completed; we enclose an index to the whole volume. Back numbers from Vol. 1, No. 2 to Vol. 2, No. 5 may be obtained from the Editor. We regret that Vol. 1, No. 1 is out of print.

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